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Poland/USSR (Latvia)

SUBJECT

Security Measures/Port Facilities/
Ships ObservedPLACE
ACQUIRED

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Security Measures

1. [redacted] left Casablanca [redacted] with a cargo of fertilizer and arrived at the Swinemunde buoy, Stettin, [redacted] where a pilot and one guard boarded the ship while several other guards remained on the pilot tug. The guards were armed with pistols and submachine guns, and wore green uniforms. After [redacted] was docked the usual security and customs search of the vessel was conducted, and a guard was stationed on the dock at the bow gangway and a second at the stern of the ship. A similar perfunctory search was conducted before the ship departed. None of the crew went ashore at Stettin although they were permitted to do so.

2. [redacted] departed Stettin [redacted] in ballast and arrived at Ventspils where [redacted] loaded a cargo of raw cotton waste, etc., which was subsequently discharged. [redacted] vessel was boarded at the harbor entrance by one soldier and a pilot, and after reaching the dock, both before and after loading, a rather perfunctory search was performed.

Port Facilities

3. At Stettin [redacted] was docked at a point on the west side of the Oder near Herrenwiese, north of the city proper. The dock was located at a fertilizer plant near a place called Hedwigs Hute (phonetic). There were two fixed electric three to five-ton cranes, about 15 years old, of German manufacture, used to unload the cargo of fertilizer, [redacted] no floating cranes in the port. The cargo consisting of 3200 tons of fertilizer was unloaded in 18 hours. While in Stettin, the maximum draft [redacted] the dock was 19'. An icebreaker was running day and night between Swinemunde and Stettin, and according to the pilot the river was so full of ice that only three to four ships were in the Stettin port area.

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4. At Ventspils, the pilot boarded [] at the "lighted buoy outside the harbor entrance" and took the vessel to its berth on the north side of the Venta river (57° 23' 54" N, 21° 33' 30" E). [] three or four three-ton traveling electric cranes at this dock, and [] there were not so many sheds or warehouses along the quay []. A standard gauge railroad serviced the quay and telephone facilities were available on the docks.

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Ships Observed

5. [] there were three or four merchant ships in the Stettin port area [] however, while passing Swinemunde in the Fish Harbor (53° 55' N, 14° 17' 10" E) an undetermined number of small naval craft, possibly minesweepers. [] these small ships were Soviet []

6. At Ventspils there was berthing space along the quay for five or six merchant ships, and [] three small old Soviet freighters, one of which was discharging coal. On the bank of the Venta [] many small Soviet vessels, cutter size, which had one gun []

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Miscellaneous

7. While in the Stettin port area, 54° 00' 15" N, 14° 17' E, [] the wreck of a former warship whose mast and a part of the superstructure were visible above the water. The wreck was marked by a green light. The wreck marked by a flashing red light, about 1/3 mile NE of the former warship mentioned above is reported to be no longer there.

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8. [] 40 miles out of Ventspils, [] encounter considerable ice, and the harbor was so full of ice that the assistance of tugs was necessary to break through to the quay. The cargo loaded at Ventspils, consisting of 800 tons of rags, old clothes, cotton waste, goat and horse hair, and oil drums containing margarine was for transshipment [] to China. [] in Ventspils [] limited number of people [] appeared to be of Mongolian origin, and [] there are very few Latvians still in the area.

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9. [] ship approached the port of Ventspils and while still out of sight of land, [] radioed a request for radio beacon services. Shortly after this request, a two-engine, propeller-driven, commercial-type plane appeared circling over the ship, seemingly in order to determine [] identity.

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